

When a 'Goat' Becomes a Hero—A Lonely Cry of

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The public image of Francis Gary Powers has come full circle. A few months ago, he appeared a failure. Today, he is a hero. The truth is that he is neither.

Quick to condemn, quick to applaud, America has built up an attitude over the years that abhors the in-between. Her people drew Mr. Powers as they draw all their celebrities, many times bigger than life.

When he was caught, tried and convicted, all the while talking freely, he was condemned

as a bum in some quarters. When he strode purposefully before a Senate committee Tuesday and said, "I'm an American," he was happily applauded.

The distance from "goat" to hero is very short. Ask any World Series fan. Or, better still, ask any baseball player or other celebrity who has felt the pendulum of public favor clip him from both directions.

It is a fact of American life that we cannot stand to look upon Mr. Powers for what he is—an ordinary American in an extraordinary situation. He is neither a bum nor a hero but a human being.

At least one member of Congress is dissatisfied with the rehabilitation of Mr. Powers' public image. Rep. Frank J. Becker, R, N. Y., a member of the House Armed Services Committee, denounced the Central Intelligence Agency's report exonerating Mr. Powers.

"Nothing but a whitewash," Rep. Becker told a reporter, adding that he believed Mr. Powers broke his contract with the CIA when he failed to destroy his airplane.

"A lot of Powers' statements sound fantastic to me," Rep. Becker said. "There appears to be a lot of cover-up going on." Rep.

Whitewash

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